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DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP, G, INL, DRL, EUR/PGI, EUR/SE, EUR/PPD

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SUBJECT: TIP: TURKISH MFA EXPRESSES DISMAY AT REPORTED USG USE OF  
FRONTLINE VIDEO "SEX SLAVES"

REF: STATE 73395

¶1. (SBU) Summary: MFA DDG for Expatriate Turks, Migration, Asylum and Property issues Akif Ayhan called us in on September 4 to express GOT dismay at the U.S. Representative to UNVIE's announced plans to show the documentary "Sex Slaves" at the UNDC in Vienna towards the end of September. While Turkey has openly acknowledged that it has been on the receiving end of human trafficking from Russia, Ukraine, and other countries, he said it should not be singled out and held up as a bad example in this fashion. Ayhan reviewed U.S.-Turkey cooperation in combating human trafficking and noted Turkey's elevation to a Tier 2 country in U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. A non-paper was passed; full text is in paragraph 10. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Ayhan met with Consul Sandra Shipshock and passed a non-paper that requests UNVIE cancel its plans to show the video "Sex Slaves" later this month in Vienna. Ayhan said the documentary had been originally shown on February 7 this year as part of the "Frontline" series. Reftel encouraged Posts to use the video in their outreach efforts.

¶3. (SBU) Minister Ayhan said Turkey's relatively relaxed entry requirements for visitors from Russia, Ukraine, and other countries in the region are an important element of the pull factor. In fact, after Germans, the Slavic population represents the second-largest group of visitors in search of sun, sand and an economical holiday. A small percentage of visitors are also seeking a foothold in the illegal labor market, particularly in the fields of home health care, domestic work, or entertainment. "We are not a police state," Ayhan said, "and we cannot track the activities of each person who enters." He said that since the time of Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, Turkey has followed a path of liberalization in the realms of politics, economics, and human interaction. Ayhan commented that Turkey does not wish to restrict migration, but acknowledged there needs to be a balance between security concerns and maintaining an open society.

¶4. (SBU) Ayhan reviewed Turkey's programs to assist victims of human trafficking, which have been put in place with the assistance of the U.S. government, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other NGOs. Shelters for victims have been opened in Istanbul and Ankara. A special hotline for victims has been set up with Russian, Turkish, English and Romanian-speaking counselors available to assist.

¶5. (SBU) Ayhan said that that the Turkish Penal Code (TPC) does not mention clearly enough the crime of human trafficking. Article 227 only addresses prostitution, and while Article 80 does refer to human trafficking, it pertains to exploitation of laborers, such as children, and did not contemplate victims of the sex trade. He said that the Turkish Parliament will correct this, but it will take some time.

¶6. (SBU) Ayhan noted that human smuggling, trafficking, and organized crimes all have possible links with terrorist rings, as they can be revenue-generating centers to support possible terrorist activities. Ayhan made it clear that the government does not deny there is a problem in human trafficking within its borders - "it is a mea culpa situation" -- and admitted that they still have a ways to go. He blamed the media for its tendency to sensationalize the topic, and said inaccurate reporting was a continuing problem, as writers confuse smuggling with trafficking.

¶7. (SBU) Returning to the showing of "Sex Slaves," he said that an officer at the Turkish mission in Vienna had watched the program and was disappointed. Ayhan said his government objects to the "politically critical" portrayal of Turkey's customs and police officials as playing a role in the trafficking.

¶8. (SBU) The Turkish Government is conveying their message of concerns on several fronts, including to the U.S. Mission in New York, the U.S. Mission in Vienna and, in the near future, through the Turkish Ambassador in Washington. Ayhan also noted that Turkey is about to take the chair on the Budapest process meetings to combat illegal migration.

¶9. (SBU) Comment and Recommendation: Turkey acknowledges that it has a trafficking problem and is taking active steps to deal with

it. The 2006 TIP report stated that Turkey is "making significant efforts" to fully comply with standards for the elimination of trafficking. US missions planning to use the video can incorporate these facts into their presentations. They might also give consideration to appropriate ways for dealing with counterpart Turkish missions on the matter. End Comment and Recommendation.

¶10. (SBU) Begin Text of Non-Paper:

Permanent Mission of Turkey to the UN Office in Vienna reported that the US Mission to International Organizations in Vienna (UNVIE) informed them of their intention to show a movie on some Moldovan and Ukrainian victims of human trafficking in Turkey at the UNDC in Vienna towards the end of September and invite our Permanent Representative to make a speech addressing the issue during the event.

We have learned with regret that in some parts of this movie, Turkish security and customs officials are portrayed as colluding with the traffickers or being soft on the unlawful acts of these persons.

We believe that the events as reflected in the movie are not compatible with the current realities in Turkey and conveys an image opposite to Turkey's uphill battle against human trafficking.

Being one of destination countries, Turkey is actively and effectively combating against human trafficking. She has made strides in this area. An informative note concerning turkey's ongoing fight against this scourge is enclosed herewith for further reference.

Turkey's endeavours in this field have also been recognized by the US State Department. Once a "Tier 3" country, Turkey has been promoted to "Tier 2" category in State Department's annual "Trafficking in Person's Report."

We understand that this movie distributed by the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to the US Missions, intends to draw attention to a global issue. However, it regrettably fails to depict a realistic picture about the current situation on the ground in Turkey. The movie also fails to project the strenuous efforts of Turkish authorities.

We consider the invitation addressed to our Permanent Representative in Vienna to make a speech prior to such an event as inappropriate.

Therefore, the display of this movie by American Missions under the instructions of the State Department could not be regarded as an act which would strengthen the joint actions towards fulfillment of our ultimate objectives. As a matter of fact, showing films on UN platforms blaming other UN members is not a customary practice and will not contribute to enhancing our common fight against trafficking in human beings.

We respectfully demand that the movie in question be urgently withdrawn and any public display of the said movie be refrained.

Encl: 1

ONGOING EFFORTS OF TURKEY  
(COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS)

-- Turkey is a destination country in human trafficking. In 2004, 239 victims, in 2005, 256 victims and in 2006 (1 January-21 August) 193 victims were identified. In 2004 and 2005, 495 traffickers were apprehended in Turkey.

-- Within the framework of the National Action Plan prepared by the Task force (Chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), in 2003, Cooperation Protocols were signed respectively by Directorate General of Security and by Gendarmerie with NGOs which run shelters in Istanbul and Ankara for victims.

-- Victims receive medical, psychological and legal counseling at these shelters. Since their inauguration, nearly 300 victims were accommodated in these shelters.

-- The Ministry of Health extends free medical care and medication to victims of trafficking.

-- The Ministry of Interior issues free of charge six months valid and extendable residence permits to victims without any preconditions, such as cooperating with authorities. Until today 35 residence permits were issued to the victims.

-- A toll free tip off/emergency helpline (157) became operational in May 2005. Until today, 98 victims were reached through this helpline.

-- A spot film promoting 157 helpline for victims is aired on Turkish TV channels as well as on channels in Moldova and Ukraine.

-- More than 600,000 pamphlets (in Turkish, Russian, Romanian, and English) have been handed over at air and sea ports by the Turkish National Police.

-- A new public awareness campaign was launched by IOM on January 31, 2006.

-- An EU Twinning Project on Trafficking in Human Beings was initiated in 2006. An Action Plan will be drawn up as an output of this project.

-- Turkey in cooperation with IOM has initiated a project on establishment of a data collection network on victims of human trafficking in the Black Sea region.

-- Turkey has signed cooperation protocols on combating trafficking in human beings with Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus.

-- Turkey participates in the activities carried out within the framework of NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe, BSEC, Bali Process, SECI and Bern Initiative. She recently took over the Chairmanship of the Budapest Process.

-- Turkey also actively attended the sessions of the Council of Europe for the drafting of a human trafficking convention namely "CAHTEH."

End Text.

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